

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6680-S

March 30, 1996

To the Honorable President and Members,  
The Senate of the State of Washington  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6680 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the performance assessment of state government;"

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6680, for the most part, creates a new legislative committee and office to conduct performance reviews of state agencies and programs. These reviews would determine whether agencies and programs should be strengthened, abandoned, or redirected and would evaluate whether there is still a valid purpose for them. They would also look at program costs, priorities, performance improvements, and strategic plans. These kinds of inquiries are valid and usually provide useful direction to state agencies. They also identify where state government programs should be cut back because of changing circumstances or should be expanded to meet new needs. I support these efforts and believe they should be strengthened.

However, the powers and duties given to the new Legislative Committee on Performance Review and to its staff office are unfunded and seriously overlap current responsibilities of the Legislative Budget Committee and its successor agency, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee. This committee was created by Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2222.

While I strongly support any coordinated, well-planned, and properly funded effort to evaluate state agency performance, I am concerned that two legislative agencies with overlapping directives in this area would not be beneficial. Indeed, they could result in conflicting demands and directives on executive branch agencies that would be difficult and costly to fulfill. I cannot approve those sections of the bill relating to the powers and duties of the Legislative Committee on Performance Review and the Legislative Office of Performance Review.

On the other hand, section 10 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6680 provides reasonable and timely direction to state agencies and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) in a number of critical areas. It directs agencies to define their missions, goals, and objectives; to establish performance measures; and to adopt processes for continuous self-assessment and improvement. Section 10 also directs OFM to institute performance-based budgeting and to assist agencies in developing performance measurement systems. The supplemental appropriations act provides OFM with additional resources to accomplish these goals. These are useful steps that should be taken, and they build on work already done by agencies, OFM, and the Washington Performance Partnership Council. Section 10 should, therefore, be approved.

Section 12 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6680 repeals the enabling act for the Washington Performance Partnership Council. That organization and its staff contributed significantly to developing a workable Washington State management model, defined

the role of state executives in strategically managing change, and began the process of incorporating continuous process improvement and performance measurement into our management culture. Since their work is done and they are no longer funded, the repealers in section 12 are appropriate.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6680.

With the exception of sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 14, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6680 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Lowry  
Governor